

**City of Belmont  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING      JUNE 1, 2011  
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of June 1, 2011 was called to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

**I.                    ROLL CALL**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:      Chair (CC) Cheechov, Vice Chair Davis, Youth Commissioner (YC) Zakeri, Commissioner (C) Wright, King, Bortoli, and Sullivan

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:      C Andrews and YC Bartee

STAFF PRESENT:                      Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais and Secretary (S) Saggau

**II.                    APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*C Davis moved, seconded by C King to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 6, 2011.* Vote 6 in favor, C Sullivan abstained.

**III.                   PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

C Davis noted that Ralston School will be having a major remodel and questioned if this would have an impact on use of the fields. PRD Gervais said he has met with the School District staff and viewed some preliminary designs and noted there is information on the school's website. PRD Gervais there would be impacts during construction and city staff will continue meeting with the School District. C Wright asked if the School is considering energy efficient measures and PRD Gervais replied that they did have a meeting on sustainability measures for the schools.

C Davis suggested the City consider a program on walker safety and installing signage at some intersections. PRD Gervais stated that could be reviewed by the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee and he would provide the contact information to C Davis so that he may put in a request to them. PRD Gervais noted cutting back of vegetation would improve visibility issues for pedestrians. C Sullivan suggested putting out a publication on safe walking routes promoting residents cutting back brush on their property.

C Davis thanked C Sullivan for an experience in trail building.

C King noted the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Free Concerts in the Park would start on June 19, 2011.

C Bortoli reported on the Senior Advisory Board Meeting. The lunch program is doing well – people are happy with the lunches being served and attendance has been very good. He noted this month the Mayor, the City Manager and the Police Chief will each come to one of the lunches. C Bortoli said the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month dance at the Senior Center has been going well; a mixer with teenagers in May had mixed reviews with the seniors. He noted the Senior Center provides free income tax assistance and saw 252 clients this year.

C Wright reported on the Green Advisory Committee (GAC). She noted they had a special meeting with the City Council where they presented four different ordinances for discussion and direction. These included (1) a ban on single-use shopping bags; (2) a ban on Styrofoam, (3) construction and demolition debris and (4) outdoor water use conservation.

C Sullivan reported trail work has progressed on the new lake loop trail. Evening hours have been added and work is scheduled for every other weekend. He noted Patch has assisted with recruiting volunteers by getting the word out to a broader range of the community.

C Sullivan noted meetings have begun for National Night Out which is scheduled for Tuesday, August 2, 2011. This event centers around community safety.

C Bortoli reported on the Sports Advisory Committee. The Sub-Committee reviewed the bids received for the design of the Sports Complex. PRD Gervais added the selection of the Landscape Architect would happen soon.

#### **IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

None.

#### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **a. Davey Glen Park Project Conceptual Design Options**

PRD Gervais reviewed the history of the plans to develop this park and the progress made. Following the series of meetings to develop plans for this project the Sub-Committee has created three options for Commission consideration.

There are five areas in the park:

- A. Entrance Area
- B. Grassy Play Area
- C. Play Structure
- D. Trail
- E. Interpretive Signs

Option 1 includes all five areas. It was noted that this design is well liked but the costs are a challenge.

Option 2 removes area D from the design. Area D would provide a nature trail which was identified in the Parks & Open Space Master Plan. It was noted that there may be some safety concerns with visibility and maintenance could be difficult.

Option 3 moves the play structure from Area C into Area B. This would create a smaller park that would not capture the nature of the site and not use the entire breadth of the park.

PRD Gervais reviewed the costs of the different options. Option 1 would take longer to fundraise because of the significant shortfall. Option 2 is short approximately \$185,000 and Option 3 is near the allocated funds. Staff is recommending trying Option 2 as it keeps most of the park and the fundraising seems reasonable. The City could go back to Option 3 if funding is not obtained. He added Option 2 is supported by the Ad-Hoc Committee.

PRD Gervais noted the Planning Commission reviewed this project in April. The Planning Commission liked the design of this park and expressed favor for Area D which would provide a different experience than is available in most neighborhood parks. He added their discussion did not center on the budget for this project.

PRD Gervais responded to questions from the Commission:

- The grass area (#16) in Option 3 is close to the size of the lawn area in Semeria Park
- The playground equipment estimate has been reduced to \$55,000 which would not cover the costs of the custom play equipment previously reviewed by the Commission
- The .34 acre park per 1,000 people currently in this neighborhood is Patricia Wharton Park.
- Estimate for Mobilization/Bonds is 8% which is conservative.
- The playground area is not elevated but the area is graded and Area #18 in Option 3 may need a retaining wall.
- The manhole cover #17 for drainage access would need to remain and a different cover would need to be determined for it.
- The hardscape in Option 3 would include the resilient surfacing for the playground.
- Fencing would be installed around the play structure at the end of Section B in Option 3.
- Possible grant funding sources include the second round of Proposition 84, Land and Water Conservation and in kind services from Davey Tree. PRD Gervais estimated the chance of raising \$185,000 in grant funding was 50/50.

CC Cheechov noted the Commission received at least 15 emails with several stating they want a play structure with a climbing feature and a slide and a bike riding area.

Paul O'Leary spoke in favor of all of the design but acknowledged the financial realities. He suggested trail builders could build trails later and that Option 2 may be the way to go. He noted the City spent funds to purchase the land for Semeria Park and the park land for Davey Glen was given for free. He suggested doing fundraising by selling bricks with names and see if it is easy way to raise funds for other parks.

Jim Callan questioned how the \$55,000 play structure would compare to the \$110,000 play structure previously proposed. PRD Gervais explained the actual design is not decided but the unique one of a kind structure was very nice but it is not affordable. \$55,000 would be enough to purchase a nice play structure that could also accommodate all the age groups originally targeted. Mr. Callan noted times are tough and there is a lot of competition for funding and that Option 3 would be more of a sure thing.

Michelle Ladcani spoke in support of this park and having a park to walk to. She noted she visited Semeria Park and was amazed at the sense of community created in this neighborhood by this park. She requested that a play structure be included in Davey Glen Park that would accommodate children of all ages. She added she is committed to helping with fundraising for this park.

Charisse Lee expressed appreciation for fencing being proposed along the hillside. She expressed concern that Option 2 is 140% of the \$450,000 budgeted. For safety reasons Ms. Lee preferred the play structure be placed in Area B as presented in Option 3 which would make it more visible from Davey Glen Road. She questioned if traffic safety has been considered for this location and PRD Gervais explained the bulb out should slow traffic and that a crosswalk would not be installed.

C King stated she recommends Option 3 because the money is available and she does not want to wait to go forth with this project.

C Wright recommended that the City Council be able to see the different options presented and be given the Commission's recommendation. She reminded the Commission that there are people that did not want a park or preferred something more passive and the play structure was placed further in the park to provide a quiet area. She added there is also a need for more flat grassy areas in parks. C Wright stated she would like to try for Option 2 and if funds cannot be raised Option 3 could be reconsidered. PRD Gervais noted he intends to present all design options to the City Council.

C Davis agreed with C Wright that Option 2 would provide a passive area in the park and did not think the play area was much further visually. He questioned staff's concern that there would be problems with maintenance and safety for Area D. He said he would go with the staff's recommendation for Option 2 noting that costs may be less than estimated and that at minimum we should try to build Option 2.

C Bortoli stated he prefers Option 3 because it is a fully funded option. He spoke in favor of the scaling back the play equipment as he thought the previous design considered was too big for a neighborhood park. He would like this project to get moving soon. He added if bids come in less than Option 3 these funds could be used in other parks.

C Sullivan expressed strong support for Option 2. He would like to go for an option that includes Area D but understood cost concerns. He noted that the project budget was set 10 years ago and it was not considered what was possible then. He noted that funds were spent to purchase the land for Semeria Park before all of the project costs and it is half the space and does

not have the access challenges like Davey Glen Park. He noted the City agreed to spend \$75,000 to design the Sports Complex and that project will cost at least \$2 million to build. He added there was financial support for the Manor House and moving the Emmett House and these projects probably exceeded their budgets. C Sullivan emphasized a lot of the park costs are due to access to the site and he thinks it is a great park design that came from a lot of community input and the City should stretch itself to get it.

YC Zakeri stated she lives on Davey Glen and she would prefer to have Option 2. She preferred the best idea be presented to Council and Option 3 would provide a backup plan. She noted there are a lot of people in the area that would use the park. She added that is a lot of money to fundraise but knows there is support in Belmont.

C Bortoli questioned if YC Zakeri would have a conflict of interest living on Davey Glen and PRD Gervais stated he would check.

CC Cheechov stated she agrees that Option 2 is the more attractive park but that \$450,000 is allocated for this park. She said if they go with Option 3 it guarantees that there will be a park with the wanted amenities but not as large a grassy area. She expressed preference for Option 3 because of her concern with not having the extra funds for Option 2.

***C Sullivan moved, seconded by C Davis, that the Commission send the proposal and design background of the park which clearly shows area D as the total design package but recommend choosing Option 2 and moving forward with design and construction process on that option.***

*4 In Favor: Zakeri, Wright, Davis & Sullivan*

*3 Opposed: Cheechov, King & Bortoli*

**b. Priority Calendar Follow Up**

PRD Gervais reported that the City Council wanted to look at the Priority Calendar differently this year. City Manager Scoles suggested tying projects into the City's vision statement. The revised Council Priority Calendar was included in the Commission packet.

PRD Gervais noted on the last page of the Priority Calendar is a list of projects that were not included in the Priority Calendar as they are not considered city-wide priorities. He explained these projects can still be completed by the Departments.

PRD Gervais responded to Commission questions:

- The Priority Calendar is a public document but it is also a work in progress.
- The Solar Energy Policy and Facilities Condition Management Assessment may be brought to the Commission because the Parks & Recreation Department manages city facilities. Staff has been investigating the condition of facilities and determining challenges in keeping facilities in good condition long term.
- Below the Line projects that are in progress will continue to be worked on.

- There is an element of the General Plan for Parks & Recreation & Open Space which would be a condensed version of the Parks & Open Space Master Plan. There will be some planning for parks and open space along with the General Plan and this should be used when updating the Parks & Open Space Master Plan.
- The Barrett Play Equipment project will move forward with new swings and a new play structure.
- The City would still qualify to be a Tree City if the Tree Planting Program is not done.
- The City Council worked on the Priority Calendar at a retreat which was open to the public.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **A. Questions and Comments**

PRD Gervais stated the City is still having discussions with Foster City and San Mateo on combining the Adult Softball League. He added at the next Commission meeting there would be a report on Recreation Programs.

PRD Gervais noted the budget would be on the City Council agenda on June 14, 2011. He added Mayor Feierbach has indicated she would like to see some improvements in the lobby of the Senior Center so staff is looking into new carpet and furniture for it.

C King commented that there was an article in the newspaper that said there are studies being done on the belief that the more trees a city has the less crime there is in that city. PRD Gervais noted the Tree Ordinance is schedule to be on the City Council agenda on July 12, 2011.

### **B. Future Agenda Items**

Recreation Programs  
Grant Money for Paper Trails

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

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Jonathan Gervais  
Parks & Recreation Director